

MUSEUM NEWS

MARCH
1953
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LT. COL. TARLETON

ENGRAVED BY JOHN RAPHAEL SMITH AFTER SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS
GIFT OF MRS. STEVENSON SCOTT, NEW YORK

THE TOLEDO MUSEUM OF ART
FOUNDED BY EDWARD DRUMMOND LIBBEY

ENGLISH MEZZOTINTS

THIRTY-EIGHT MEZZOTINTS, THE GIFT of Mrs. Stevenson Scott of New York in memory of her husband, bring to the Museum choice examples of England's greatest development in the field of engraving. Mr. Scott, of Scott and Fowles, the New York art dealers, was closely associated with Mr. Libbey and Mr. George Stevens in the early years of the Museum, and he assembled this collection of prints as a personal avocation. Jacob Epstein's head of Mme. Gabrielle Soene was his gift to the Museum in 1937.

It was in eighteenth century Britain that the art of mezzotint engraving flourished with greatest vigor. Prince Rupert (1619-1682), the soldier-cousin of Charles II, introduced and made fashionable the new method of which he himself was a skilled exponent. The Prince had learned the process from its German inventor, Ludwig von Siegen, who made his first print about 1642. However, not until the century following with its rise of the great generation of portraitists which included Reynolds, Romney and Gainsborough, was the method extensively used. Printmakers found that the deep velvety tones and



ISABELLA, DUCHESS OF RUTLAND
ENGRAVED BY VALENTINE GREEN
AFTER SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS
GIFT OF MRS. STEVENSON SCOTT

broad masses of light and dark which could be obtained were ideally suited to the reproduction of the painter's variations in value. Prints of the best quality were made in relatively small numbers of twenty or thirty as the delicate burr was quickly worn down. Plates were heavily reworked, but they rarely recaptured the fresh and rich 'bloom' of early impressions. The market for these prints was so large and the method so complementary to painterly effects that little or no creative work was attempted until very recent years. The handsomely decorative appearance of mezzotints has appealed to collectors who have always set a high value on choice examples.

A mezzotint is prepared in a direction which is exactly the reverse of that employed in other engraving methods. The artist having first



BAGNIGGIE WELLS

ENGRAVED BY JOHN RAPHAEL SMITH AFTER J. SANDERS
GIFT OF MRS. STEVENSON SCOTT

prepared a plate which would print very dark, then proceeds to work out the lighter portions. The method as developed in the eighteenth century, consists of roughening the surface of a soft, polished copper plate with a broad, curved blade or 'rocker' which is grooved on one side and then sharpened to produce a serrated edge. The blade is rocked back and forth over the plate twice to produce two even series of lines which are at right angles to one another. The surface is now covered with hundreds of tiny ink-retaining 'burrs' which are then removed with the scraper, a metal tool, in those places where lights are to appear. Where the plate is to print white, a burnisher is used to give a final smoothness, while toothed wheels (roulettes) are employed on partially scraped surfaces to produce the complex lines and patterns of embroidery and hair.

The names of John Raphael Smith, Valentine Green, Samuel Cousins, John Jones and the brothers Ward are among those whose work made the English mezzotint of their time an important step in the history of graphic art. All of these great printmakers are represented in Mrs. Scott's generous gift. Great discernment and judgment were required to transcribe from oil and canvas to the ink and plate whose requirements were so entirely different in nature. These fine examples of the leading practitioners on exhibition for the month of March, will greatly enhance the Museum's print collection.

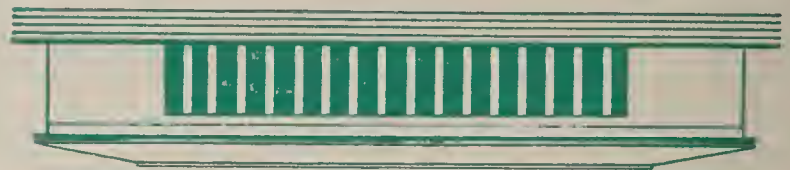
ADMISSION FREE AT ALL TIMES

OTHER DAYS, 9 A.M. - 5 P.M.

HOLIDAYS, 1 - 5 P.M.

HOURS: SUNDAYS, MONDAYS, AND

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SUNDAY AFTERNOON GALLERY PROGRAMS

WITH THE INAUGURATION of the Gallery Guidance Service under the direction of Barbara Payne, Ketcham Lecturer, interesting programs are being offered each Sunday at 2:30. Art films, available for the first time in this part of the country are being shown; talks on objects in the collection acquaint the visitor with Museum masterpieces. The programs are open to everyone interested. The subjects for the month of March are:

- March 1 Toulouse-Lautrec and the Parisian Boheme—Film
- March 8 America's Old Master
- March 15 Stories in Stone
- March 22 Monet, the Painter of Sunlight
- March 29 The Easter Story in Art

EXHIBITIONS

ENGLISH MEZZOTINTS—GIFT OF MRS. STEVENSON SCOTT, NEW YORK
WORK OF WILLIAM AND BONNIE STAFFEL, TOLEDO ARTISTS
Paintings and Ceramics